



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Forests and
Environment



International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022

MUSTANG DECLARATION ON SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN SOLUTIONS CALL FOR ACTION

21 September 2022

Recalling

1. The United Nations General Assembly declared 2022 as the **International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development** and invited Member States, UN organizations, international organizations, and stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia, to observe the International Year to increase awareness of the importance of sustainable mountain development and the conservation and sustainable use of mountain ecosystems.
2. The Prime Minister of Nepal acknowledges the importance of the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development and expresses his support to address mountain issues with sustainable solutions.

Noting

1. Nepal is a member of global and regional mountain initiatives and alliances, such as the Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries, the Mountain Partnership, and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).
2. Nepal is celebrating the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022 in partnership with several international, intergovernmental, and local organizations.
3. Sustainable mountain development requires the collective actions of mountain communities and countries at local, national, regional, and global levels, with special focus on Indigenous Peoples (IP), local communities, women, youth, and children.
4. The risks and vulnerabilities of human and natural systems caused by the triple planetary crises – of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution – are increasing at unprecedented rates in the mountains.

Reaffirming

1. Its identity as a country located in the world's tallest mountain range, the Government of Nepal intends to take a global lead in addressing mountain-specific issues and identifying sustainable mountain solutions
2. The need to develop a Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) Agenda towards transformative mountain development solutions, and calling on countries to implement this call for action based on the protection and promotion of human rights and dignity
3. The role of global mountain networks such as Mountain Partnership, Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries and ICIMOD, and requesting these networks to leverage support for mountain countries to identify appropriate mountain solutions and to take urgent actions to address climate change, biodiversity, and pollution crises
4. The need to strengthen the role of mountain ecosystems and cryosphere in the functioning of social, cultural, hydrological, and economic development activities, such as hydro-energy production, nature-based tourism, agriculture, forestry, and health and sanitation activities

We, the participants in the Mustang Advocacy Summit for Sustainable Mountain Solutions, hereby adopt this declaration and commit to take the following actions:

Mountain and Climate Change

- Work with the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group and other relevant climate negotiation groups of the UNFCCC to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees by 2100; to ensure that the global response to climate change is ambitious, fair, and equitable; and to advance the interests and aspirations of poor and vulnerable mountain countries and peoples
- Work with the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) regional countries to sharply reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) in the HKH region especially from the use of fossil fuel and coal-based energy sources in the region
- Operationalize and urgently scale up locally led adaptation actions including ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (EcoDRR) and other nature-based solutions with a clear roadmap to address mountain-specific challenges and enhance sustainable adaptation and resilience building
- Work with LDCs and other climate vulnerable mountain countries for establishing a global financial facility dedicated to mountain countries in addressing loss and damage (L and D), and reducing risks from extreme events and disasters such as floods, droughts, landslides, forest fires and GLOFs, etc.

Mountain Economy

- Promote comprehensive (both market and non-market) valuation of mountain ecosystem services (natural capital) to attract investment in nature-based markets, green businesses, and greener economies by integrating the value of ecosystem services into the national economy
- Increase public and private sector investment to foster transition toward cleaner energy and to drive mountain economies in overcoming remoteness, fragility, and dearth of finance in mountain regions
- Promote mountain entrepreneurship focusing on youth, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women, and build infrastructure and capacity aimed at creating markets for niche mountain products, certification standards, adoption of digital technologies and streamline value chains such that the bulk of the income from mountain agriculture and natural resources remains with the mountain entrepreneurs
- Ensure the current climate financing and future new collective quantified goals for climate finance are based on science to address the needs of vulnerable mountain countries including the LDCs and to strengthen mountain economies including focus on technology transfer and capacity building

Mountain Biodiversity and Ecosystems

- Promote conservation and sustainable use and management of mountain biodiversity and ecosystem services based on the principles of community participation, gender equality and social inclusion, landscape approaches, community-based forest management, nature-based solutions, transdisciplinary efforts, and multistakeholder and transboundary collaboration
- Recognize the role of mountain biodiversity and ecosystem services in achieving the SDGs and increase opportunities that promote investments supporting a green, resilient, and inclusive economy; sustainable production and consumption; and create economic incentives to protect and manage mountain ecosystems
- Conserve unique mountain landscapes such as the Annapurna Conservation Area for promoting nature-based tourism, environmentally friendly and climate-smart infrastructure development and as an example of a natural landscape demonstrating harmony between humans and nature
- Recognize and respect the role of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth in conservation, sustainable use, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from mountain biodiversity and ecosystem resources
- Conserve and promote mountain agro-biodiversity, transhumance pastoralism, rangelands, and mountain wetlands such that ecological, economic, and socio-cultural benefits are enhanced

Mountain Culture

- Recognize and promote Indigenous and local knowledge and good practices to conserve biocultural heritage and promote culturally sensitive sustainable mountain development
- Advocate for customary rights and recognize and respect the roles of cultural practices in conserving mountain ecosystems, managing natural resources, and promoting cultural heritage tourism
- Carry out an inventory of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and implement appropriate preservation measures including environmental and cultural friendly education in local school curricula
- Generate green jobs for providing gainful employment and income generating opportunities for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, youth, and other marginalized groups in culture-based tourism

Mountain Women

- Ensure gender equity, equality and empowerment by supporting women's leadership, and provided dedicated funding and strengthening of women-led organizations leading to inclusive mountain development
- Work toward ensuring 50 percent women in all government, non-government, community-based and private sector organizations working in mountain areas in line with the SDGs
- Equip mountain women with research capacity, scientific knowledge, access to technology, advocacy skills, political representation, and leadership
- Establish regional mountain women's networks to foster gender equality across mountainous countries in the region
- Educate the society to acknowledge and respect women's empowerment and gender equality across all spheres of life
- Strengthen social protection schemes targeting women including insurance policies that cover climate vulnerability

Mountain-Lowland Interconnections

- Promote better enforcement of environmental safeguards, economic incentives and effective implementation of policies and enforcement of regulations for improved environmental management and catchment conservation in the hydropower sector, minimizing sedimentation and ensuring minimum environment flow to sustain freshwater biodiversity and healthy and prosperous watershed communities
- Strengthen transboundary cooperation and collaboration between subnational and national governments embracing the principles and practices of integrated river basin management leading to sustainable land management, land degradation neutrality, equitable benefit sharing and improved DRR through functioning early warning systems
- Improve governance in the mountain landscapes through enabling policies and legal frameworks, institutional capacity building within countries, and cross-border exchange of knowledge, information and good practices recognizing mountains as a global common

Way Forward for Action

- The Government of Nepal to take initiative to explore possibilities of an HKH Ministerial Council related to forests, environment, and climate change
 - Development of mountain-specific programmes, projects, and plans
 - Mobilization of financial resources from various sources, including private sector investment
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